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**Resources and Development Committee discusses
leasing data and revenues report from Navajo Land Department**

WINDOW ROCK – The Resources and Development Committee discussed a report from the Navajo Land Department on Tuesday, concerning the department’s revenues from leasing services and filing fees.

The RDC requested for the Navajo Land Department to provide insight about its leasing procedures and processes which would assist the RDC in amending grazing policies.

“The homesite leasing process is tied to grazing issues, we want information about how many leases there are,” said RDC Chair Council Delegate Katherine Benally (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta). “The RDC wants to make sure the Nation is getting its fair share of leasing revenue.”

Currently, the Navajo Land Department receives revenue from: homesite annual and filing fees, surveys, lease payments, right-of-ways services, project reviews, surface damages, and various permits.

Navajo Land Department manager Mike Halona, informed the RDC that the department does not collect revenue from NTUA because they receive a wavier for right-of-way fees and that the Land Department is working to create a system that lists all approved leases on the Navajo Nation.

RDC member Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) said he would like for the Land Department to provide a listing of entities ‘due and owing’ in order to increase revenues.

Delegate Benally and Delegate Tsosie raised concerns about NTUA right-of-way charges incurred by Navajo chapters during electric power line projects, as chapters have been charged up to \$15,000 per mile, said Delegate Benally.

“If NTUA is charging a right-of-way fee then those fees should be listed as Land Department revenue,” said Delegate Tsosie. “If there is an NTUA waiver for right-of-ways, then they shouldn’t be collecting fees.”

Delegate Benally questioned what a right-of-way fee consisted of and how the NTUA fee compared with the Land Department right-of-way fee.

“A right-of-way fee includes a cultural resources inventory, legal description, archeological survey and labor fees,” said Halona.

Halona also added that NTUA was originally given a right-of-way waiver due to the high demand for infrastructure across the nation, which has led to a rise in right-of-way costs by contracted entities.

“With a right-of-way waiver, the right-of-way costs should have gone down,” said Delegate Tsosie. “These costs are making it more difficult for young Navajo families to return and build a home on the Nation.”

Delegate Benally recommended that all entities involved in the right-of-way leasing process should meet to discuss streamlining the process and to inform others of the financial and technical challenges they each face.

The RDC will vote whether or not to accept the report at the next scheduled meeting.

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